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17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS) The need for compensatory education in and the necessity of providing outstanding teachers and community workers for depressed areas are discussed. Disadvantaged youth are characterized by their nonpurposeful activity, indifference to responsibility, poor health habits, poor communication skills and reading habits, limited experiences and contacts in the areas upon which school programs are built, and a failure syndrome resulting from the apathy engendered by their environment. Such traits lead to low achievement rates, behavior difficulties, poor attendance, and high dropout rates.

Compensatory education is a major way in which schools can help deprived youth. Compensatory programs are costly; in many cities financial aid has been given to schools with high numbers of disadvantaged children.

A program is dependent for success on teachers, volunteer workers, and community workers, who commit their time, energy, expertise, and special skills; who understand the needs and problems of disadvantaged youth; and who accept these people. Schools should improve their selection procedures to weed out the hostile or the imcompetent teacher. The broadening of preservice and inservice training programs would provide a better intellectual and experiential base for the teachers of the disadvantaged and would bridge the gap between the theory of the university and the reality of the slum classroom. Teaching in the inner city should be rewarding enough to attract the best teachers. The five year teacher training curriculum is essential.

In addition to excellent teachers and to school-based and agency-based community workers who provide liaison between the school and the parents and community, schools with disadvantaged youth need psychologists, speech and hearing technicians, attendance officers, nurses and doctors, and visiting teachers or school social workers.

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THE ROLE OF TEACHERS AND COMMUNITY WORKERS IN DEPRESSED AREAS*

Carl L. Margurber

Teachers, volunteer workers and community workers must be in Sidney Harris' terms, "authentic human beings." Crucial to all their endeavors is the transmission of their authenticity in all human dealings. The authentic teacher cannot play a part, cannot pretend to care, cannot disguise false attitudes and prejudices and be the teacher Ashley Montague calls "the acknowledge legislator of the land."

Certainly authenticity applies to all teachers - teachers in our most advantaged and most disadvantaged neighborhoods. Children in prosperous communities can survive an occasional poor teacher, because of the reinforcement by the home and community. Children in depressed areas often cannot survive the rejecting teacher because the home and community reinforcements are lacking. This is not to suggest that we should condone the hostile human being in any teaching situation, but only to point up that hostility can often be overcome if there are other authentic adults in the lives of youth. The teacher, the volunteer, the community worker are often the principle source of caring in many depressed areas.

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* Prepared by Dr. Marburger, Executive Administrative Assistant of Detroit, Michigan, Public Schools, for presentation to the Georgetown University Symposium on Education and Big City Problems, October 16, 1964 and also presented, with amendments, to the Tutor Orientation Symposium, October 15, 1964.

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Who are the residents of these depressed areas? Who are these disadvantaged?[1]

They are the millions of Americans who have been systematically deprived of equal educational opp rtunities, and deprived by discrimination and prejudice, by exploitation, and by a growing indifference to social responsibility in our democratic society.

They are the millions of Americans who have congregated in the inner cities of our Great Cities. They are the millions of Americans struggling for existence in the rural areas of the country.

They are "The Invisible Poor" in Dwight MacDonald's terms, those on whom both times and good years have no effect. Constant depression in their lot.

They are the families in which always exists the common denominator of "not enough" - not enough income, information, marketable skills, education, and experience.

Disadvantaged youth, alienated adults, and children with limited backgrounds are certainly not a contemporary phenomenon. They were, however, until the 1940's, dispersed throughout the rural areas of the country or living in ghettos small enough or insignificant enough so that they could be and were effectively overlooked or ignored. World War II with its fantastic manpower

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1. Modified from the author's paper delivered at the Conference on Disadvantaged in Tuskegee, Alabama, October 25, 1963, "Eliminating Disadvantaged Through Education."

demands and subsequent automation of agriculture drastically modified that condition. The ebb and flow of the rootless which began during the depression swelled to become a major population shift as rural families by the thousands congregated in the large cities. By 1950, one child in ten in those Great Cities was considered to be a child with limited background. By 1960, this figure had grown to one in three and the projection for 1970 is that one child in two will bring varying degrees of disabling disadvantage to the school.

These children have parents who have high aspirations for their youth, or they are parents who are oblivious to educational opportunities or may even reject such opportunities when they do exist. Typically, their children are not enrolled in kindergarten. They miss this vital preparation as well as most of the pre-school experiences which are common in the middle-class home.

The youth from these homes are children who all too often reflect in their school experiences:

Indifference to responsibility

Non-purposeful activity

Poor health habits

Inadequate communication skills

Limited experience of the sort expected by the school such as:

responsibility, meaningful independence and contact with social, cultural, political ideas and institutions.

Little mastery of reading skills

A failure syndrome resultant from apathy because of poor adult models, community and neighborhood indifferences and a total experience which offers no precendent for success.

These lacks are reflected in schools by:

Lower achievement rates

Poor attendance

High incidence of behavior difficulties

High drop-out rates

Therefore there results:

Poor employment skills and potential

Limited motivation toward and understanding of civic responsibility

High incidence of dependent citizenry or marginal earning capacity.

The question for educators and all thinking men is how do we prevent this waste - this waste in human potential, this waste in dollars, this waste which so debilitates and erodes the democratic processes and the institutions through which they function?

One means by which the school can begin to make a significant impact on youth in depressed areas is through compensatory education. To compensate means to make up for. For this large segment of the population our society has much to make up for and our schools have much to make up for.

The principle of compensatory education has long been recognized by educators and citizens in the form of a different and additive experience for the physically and emotionally disadvantaged youth. The deaf child needs special equipment and teachers if he is to survive the school situation. In Detroit we put approximately $500 into the education of the "average" child. For the deaf child we put in $1800, and for the cardiac child we put in $1200. The blind, the crippled, and the cardiac child also needs specialized personnel, materials, equipment, and facilities if he is to achieve school success. These additives the taxpaper provides so that the educator can teach. With them, educators have made school success, and the good life, available to the physically handicapped. How ironic that they are unable to do the same for millions of children whose only handicap is the poverty of various kinds they have endured, which makes them unable to learn adequately in school.

Only recently has such compensation been sought for those youth who have less opportunity to complete school successfully because of cultural, experiential or economic limitations. Only recently has compensatory education been applied to older youth and adults, who, through limited experience or faulty education, also need educational additives if they are to become employable, independent citizens.

Financial compensation has been provided to schools with high percentages of disadvantaged youth in many cities. (New York's

"Higher Horizons" Project, the Great Cities Projects in some 15 cities, and projects funded by the Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Offense Control Act of 1961. I was interested to see in the paper today the article on the Cardozo School: "Cardozo Schools Need Twice Amount Spent, Report States."* In most of these cities we have been trying to provide compensatory education at something about 10% above normal cost, so that in Detroit where we spend about $500 per child we have been trying to add $50 to attempt to make a difference. This Harvard team of experts maintain that we need to double or probably even triple the expenditure really to compensate for the lacks in the lives of these children. We spend $1800 for the deaf child; do we also need $1800 for the child who cannot survive the school experience unless he has this amount behind him?) Through these various kinds of compensatory programs, many services have been provided to youth and adults, and significant and appropriate programs have been developed. The key to the success of those services and programs has been the professional personnel involved - the school administration, the teacher, the social worker, and the volunteer worker.

No program of compensatory services, no innovative educational experience, no long term institutional change can take place in any school or school system without effective leadership.

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* Gerald Grant, The Washington Post, October 14, 1964. This article dealt with the report of experts from Harvard University who were hired as consultants for the proposed Model School System for the District of Columbia.

It has often been stated that the most important single individual in any community is the elementary school principal. I would extend this to all levels of school administration, elementary and secondary. To illustrate, - the most obvious deterrant to enthusiatic and imaginative teaching is the authoritarian who sees his school as an armed camp which admits a school population in the morning, regiments them until early afternoon, and then sends them home, five days a week. More insidious and difficult is the legalist, who represses his staff, who processes each decision with perfect logic and imperfect premises, who operates exclusively through a tight chain of command, who so dampens enthusiasm and subverts innovation that any external assistance provides only short-term, palliative results. The teacher, however, is the key person upon whom the educational system depends. Her behavior and her attitudes, once she closes the door to the classroom determine whether learning, indifference to learning, or rejection of learning take place. The degree to which the critical process of socialization is accomplished is dependent upon her assumptions about teaching, about herself as teacher, and about children and youth. Those perceptions become even more critical when dealing with disadvantaged youth; those youth who often bring to the classroom a value system which is in wide variance from that of the teacher. If in the process of rejecting certain values which are alien to her values she also rejects the child, she reinforces the limitations already pressed upon that child by his

home and community. Although some teachers, through prejudice and fear, consciously reject youth who are different, most teachers who reject children do so unconsciously, registering distaste and rejection by the nuances and subtleties of their behavior. Such rejections are the result of ignorance of the environment of the children, and of an emotional commitment to values which say "anyone can make it if they just try", the hollow bootstrap play, which betrays a poor intellectual grasp of sociology, urbanization and the impact of technology, specifically automation. Teachers often view the community of their children through the window of their classroom, or the refuge of their automobile as it speeds them off to the comfort of their homogenized suburb.

The authentic teacher will not so reject children. He will not be the incompetent job-filler whose values are in contrast with the values of education. His motives will not be the moonlighting possibilities in teaching, the possible rapid promotion, the attractive ten month work schedule with two month's vacation. Rather, his motives must be humanitarian. His values must be in accordance with the intellectual and socialization values of education. He must bring to the difficult task of educating all youth a "peace corps" syndrome of energy, enthusiasm, intellectual competence and concern. Such teachers exist. They are found in all schools and school systems.

These are the teachers necessary to make a significant impact on youth in depressed areas. What must a school system do

to secure such teachers, keep such teachers and enable them to demonstrate their authenticity?

a. We must be creative enough to devise the ways to eliminate the hostile, the damaging, the incompetent teacher. Nor can we any longer accept the polarization of our positions on merit pay or other means of recognition of superior or inferior teaching.

b. We must learn how to provide meaningful inservice experience for teachers. We must bridge the gap between the theoretical of the university and the reality of the inner city classroom. (Parenthetically, I also suggest inservice education of university personnel involved in the training of teachers.)

c. We must make teaching in the inner city sufficiently attractive so that teachers will want to teach there. Extra pay for teachers is a possible answer, but compensatory books, supplies and equipment, additional back-up personnel, lower class size, the most competent administrators and general support can do more than additional pay.

The personnel placement officers in Detroit have remarked that, "If the Great Cities Project has done nothing else, it has made teaching in the inner city respectable."

d. We must also intensify our recruitment of new teachers, sharpen our skills in the screening of those teachers, develop additional skills in our preservice training programs and broaden the intellectual and experiential base for those prospective teachers. The five-year teacher training curriculum appears essential.

e. We must begin to examine the school in its contemporary context so that the competent teacher can be freed to teach. This means that we must examine the role of the school in this revolutionary period of our history and ask what we are teaching for. We must look at our fact-dominated curriculum and ask if youth can any longer deal with the relatively unsorted debris resultant from that fact-explosion. Only after such an examination can clarity come to the development of appropriate curriculum for all youth.

f. We must affirm that the school and the teacher cannot be all things to all youth and adults. Only as education assists in the catalyzing of those agencies whose function is to serve youth can the schools get out of the food, clothing, welfare and housing areas. Only a combined thrust by <u>all</u> institutions and agencies can make the impact necessary if we are to overcome the debilitating effects of poverty and deprivation. This thrust cannot be accomplished on good will alone. Dr. David Hunter, at the Conference on Urban Education and Cultural Deprivation at Syracuse University in July, brilliantly develops this thesis. He states that we must also mobilize self-interest - the self-interest of mayors, business and trade union leaders and welfare agencies if we expect a coalition that can "produce valid social progress in a community."

Teachers and administrators cannot do the job alone. Schools need the back-up services of additional personnel. Schools which contain large numbers of disadvantaged youth need additional services

from school psychologists, speech and hearing technicians, attendance officers, nurses and physicians, and visiting teachers or school social workers. There are, however, shortages of trained personnel of this type, and as a result there is a critical need for teacher aides and classroom management assistants, etc. Creativity should be used in the examination of the role of professionals to determine which of their tasks are critical, and what can be done by aides. In addition, schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods need new kinds of specialized personnel. One such person is a community worker.

School personnel need to be involved in the life of their community. In more privileged areas parents and adults express their interest in education and their aspirations for their children by active participation or, at the least, vocal support of most school-community functions. In disorganized areas, where parents and youth are often alienated from the school, teachers and administrators have neither the time nor the skills to reduce quickly and consistently the barriers between their school and their community and build the working patterns of contact and communication required. They need a competent liaison person to interpret the school to the community and the community to the school. Two such effective liaison workers have been developed in the Great Cities Projects; an indigenous lay worker in Philadelphia and a trained social worker or agency worker in Detroit.

The school-community worker in Philadelphia is a parent who lives in the school community and who may posses minimal formal educational qualifications but has comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the unique problems of his community. He may be bi-lingual if language is a barrier to school-community communication, but he is carefully selected as a person who is respected by both school staff and local citizens. He is aware of family difficulties and effectively translates this information to the school or to appropriate agencies. He also communicates the problems of his school to parents and adults in his community.

The professional school-community worker in Detroit performs many of the same functions as the lay person in Philadelphia. His expertise allows him to work with organizations and community groups in a way which the lay person cannot; but he also has the difficulty of establishing communications with the community, a difficulty which the lay person does not, generally have.

Each of these persons performs invaluable functions for the school staffs. A combination of the skills of both persons would be ideal in schools in depressed areas.

These are schools - based community workers. They can be effective because of their institutional base but the danger is always present that they too can succumb to the bureaucracy.

Other community workers do not have the advantage of the school setting, its proximity to the client, the captive clientele which in the child and his family, or the semblance of a coordinated approach to the solution of problems.

She usually does have, however, a freedom to function without the restraints imposed by the school setting - the restraints of time, schedules, bells, and the rejection of school by her clients.

Both school - based and agency based community workers are essential if we are to begin to make a significant impact on the education of youth and adults in depressed areas. However, because the school, particularly the elementary school, has a defined area and population and a functioning facility, a logical conclusion might be that many kinds of community workers could serve their community from that building. Case workers, group workers, family services and health workers and community organization specialists might use the school as their based of operations. Here are records, facilities, other professionals available for consultation and a host of other advantages. Disadvantages also exist, but can often be surmounted.

The primary disadvantage is the rejection of "social worker types" and detached workers by anxious administrators and teachers. A second disadvantage is the fortress image projected by the school which is perceived by the community as rejection or mistrust (and it often is).

Competent, effective and authentic professionals can resolve both problems. Schools throughout the country have demonstrated that educators and social workers can work side-by-side engaging the critical problems of our times. The solution to the second

problem has also been demonstrated in schools in many communities throughout the nation. The school is not a fortress where teachers and administrators show their concern for the community, when the school has been opened to youth and adults beyond the eight to three traditional school hours. The school is not a fortress when curriculum becomes the concern of parents and youth and not just teachers, supervisors and principals. These same teachers and administrators, who have torn down the moat and drawbridge, also welcome the involvement of social workers and agency people in the team approach to the solution of similar problems.

What then is the role of the teacher, the volunteer worker, and the community worker in depressed areas? It is a commitment of time, of energy, of expertise and special skills. It is a knowledge of the needs and problems of disadvantaged youth and a knowledge of self that recognizes strengths as well as weaknesses. It is authenticity as a human being. I refer again to Sidney Harris when he describes that authentic teacher:

> The few teachers who meant the most to me in my school life were not necessarily those who knew the most, but those who gave out of the fullness of themselves; who confronted me face to face, as it were, with a humanhood that awoke and lured my own small and trembling soul and called me to take hold of my own existence with my two hands.

Such persons, of course, are extremely rare, and they are worth more than we can ever pay them. It should be the prime task of a good society to recruit and develop these personalities for safeguarding our childrens futures; and our failure to do so is our most monstrous sin of omission.[2]

2. Sidney Harris, The Detroit Free Press, February 4, 1964.